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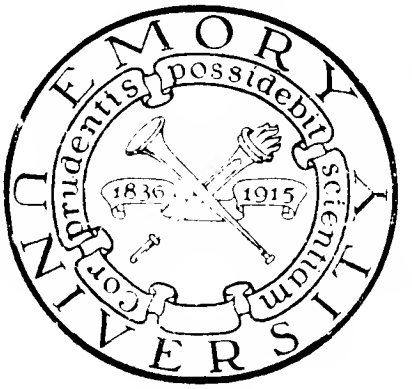

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REMINISCENCES OF SERVICE

WITH THE

FIRST VOLUNTEER REGIMENT

OF GEORGIA,

CHARLESTON HARBOR, IN 1863.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

GEORGIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

MARCH 3, 1879,

BY COLONEL CHARLES H. OLMSTEAD.

SAVANNAH, GA.:
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1879.

ANNALS OF THE WAR.

In preparing the following paper, it has been my desire only to record what its title suggests—personal reminiscences.

Leaving to other and abler pens the task of writing an accurate history of the scenes and events to which reference is now about to be made, I shall confine myself simply to the task of setting down such things as came under my personal observation, or within the scope of my individual knowledge.

I do this the more confidently, remembering the marked interest that invariably attaches to the testimony of an eye-witness, and also bearing in mind (for my own comfort) that this interest will always incline his hearers to leniency in judging literary demerits. It is probable, too, that some of my old comrades will be pleased at this recurrence to an eventful period in their lives, while a younger generation in the ranks may be glad to have placed before them a record, not of the "pomp and circumstance of glorious war," but of its privations, its hardships, its perils, and, it may be added, its lessons of self-abnegation and of devotion to duty.

Early in the month of July, 1863, while stationed very comfortably at the Isle of Hope, a courier, "spurring in hot haste," brought orders from Department headquarters that set our camp at once in a turmoil of eager and excited preparation. The 32d Georgia, Col. George P. Harrison, Jr., the 12th and 18th Georgia Battalions, Lieut.-Col. H. D. Capers and Major W S. Basinger, and a battalion from the First Volunteer Regiment of Georgia, were ordered to proceed with the least possible delay to Savannah, there to take cars for Charleston.

A private note at the same time brought the intelligence that that city, so long threatened, and, indeed, once already assailed by sea, was now to undergo a vigorous and combined attack from both land and naval forces. The day was an eventful one to us without this additional stimulant. In the morning we had received the sad news of the fall of Vicksburg and the consequent opening of the Mississippi river to the Federal fleet, from the mountains to the sea, a disaster that secured to the enemy the grand object of his most strenuous exertions, while it severed the young Confederacy in twain and deprived our armies east of the river of all the aid and comfort in the way of material supplies and gallant recruits, that had been so long and so freely drawn from the west bank. We had just learned, too, of the check received by General Lee at the battle of Gettysburg, and now came the summons to tell that our turn had come for a little squeeze in the folds of the traditional "Anaconda," that the New York *Herald* had so graphically depicted as encircling the South.

The men received the orders with enthusiasm—indeed, when was it otherwise with the Southern soldier. Thoroughly conversant, as they all were, with the details of the war, they could not but be depressed by the news of such grave reverses to our arms as the morning's mail had brought them, and they gladly welcomed the relief that active service promised from the tedium of camp life, and the necessity of thinking upon melancholy subjects.

Our march began in the midst of a terrific thunder-storm that had the effect, not only of cooling down any overplus of excitement, but also of rendering the road to the city almost a quagmire throughout its entire length.

There are pleasanter ways of spending a summer's evening than in trudging for eight miles, through mud and rain, in heavy marching order; but upon this, as on similar occasions during the war, I was deeply impressed by the uncomplaining patience and cheerfulness with which the men endured hardships that few would care to face now, but which, then, were regarded as mere matters of course—distasteful, certainly—but not worth talking about.

The storm delayed our march considerably, and upon reaching the depot we found that the 32d Regiment, which had been stationed at a point nearer the city, had already taken train for Charleston.

We, too, were soon *en route*, and early in the forenoon of the following day—July 10, 1863—the three battalions were safely in bivouac at the terminus of the Savannah and Charleston Railroad. Here we were met by a staff officer, who informed us that we were to reinforce the garrison of Battery Wagner, on Morris Island, and that at dusk the necessary transportation would be furnished to take us down to the fort. He also told us that the enemy, under cover of a tremendous fire of artillery, from batteries on Folly Island, which had been unmasked during the night, had effected a lodgment on the south end of Morris Island, and had driven our forces back upon "Wagner," which fortification would, doubtless, be attacked on the next day. We learned, also, that another force was threatening James Island, and that the 32d had been sent, with other troops, to meet that danger. Events proved that this last was a feint, to distract attention from the main attack.

All day we remained quietly at this place, endeavoring to make out the various points of interest in the beautiful harbor spread before us, and watching the little clouds of smoke that ascended from the parapets of Fort Sumter, as its guns were slowly fired at the enemy. It was a lovely day, clear and bright, without a cloud in the sky. The vegetation about us, freshened by the rain of the previous evening, added sweet odors to the soft sea-breeze that came up the bay. Upon our left the city of Charleston "sat like a queen," her roof tops and spires glittering in the sunlight, while afar down, over an expanse of shining water, could be seen the ships of the fleet swinging lazily at their anchors.

The picture was beautiful, and for one I would have found it difficult to realize that beneath it all were the grim front and iron hand of war, but for the dull rumble of the constantly recurring shot from Sumter. That was "the fly in the ointment of the apothecary;" that "the spectre at the feast;" that the refrain ever ringing in our ears and suggesting the unwelcome thought—"it looks peaceful enough now, but just wait until tomorrow."

About nightfall we embarked in a steamer that had been sent for us, and, after many delays, were safely landed at Cumming's Point, on the northern end of Morris Island. The line was formed at once, and we set out for Battery Wagner, reporting to its commander, Col. Graham, of the 21st South Carolina Regiment, at about 11 o'clock at night.

At the risk of being somewhat tedious, I must here devote a few lines to the topography of this famous island. It is a long, narrow strip of sand, running almost due north and south for about four miles, varying in breadth from, say one hundred yards at the narrowest point to half a mile at the broadest. Upon the west side the island is separated from James Island by Vincent's creek and by broad marshes intersected by numerous salt water creeks, while its eastern shore is washed throughout its entire length by the waters of the Atlantic Ocean. At the south end were the batteries from which our troops had been driven in the morning. Light House Inlet separated this point from Folly Island, and across this inlet the enemy had suddenly thrown their forces, under cover of a furious fire of artillery, as has already been stated. At the northern extremity of the island, known as Cumming's Point, was

located Battery Gregg, and about three quarters of a mile to the south of this, Battery Wagner stretched entirely across the island from the sea on the left to Vincent's creek on the right, the battery facing due south. It was an irregular work. On the extreme left a heavy traverse and curtain protected the sally port and gave a flanking fire down the beach to any force that might assail the main work. Then came a salient, one face of which commanded the ship channel, then a broken line, arranged for flanking fires, extending to the marsh. The parapets were solid, and a broad, deep, dry moat added boldness to their profile. Within the parade were bomb-proofs and lightly constructed barracks for the small garrison that had heretofore occupied the work. The armament consisted of one 10-inch Columbiad and some 32-pounders in the sea face, and four or five lighter guns, chiefly howitzers, on the land side. A short distance in front of the right of the line an inward bend of Vincent's creek narrowed the island in such manner as to render it obligatory upon an attacking force to deliver its assault only against the left half of the fort, and also affording scant opportunity for the deployment of such a column. In point of fact this peculiar feature in the topography proved of great service to us, and correspondingly troublesome to the enemy in the operations that followed. The surface of the island is but little raised above the level of the sea and presents a glaring stretch of white sandy hillocks, which were sparsely dotted with the coarse grasses of the coast, and which changed their contour in every high wind.

There is but to add that the main channel by which ships enter Charleston harbor runs within easy gunshot of Morris Island from one end of it to the other, then crosses to the northward and passes between Fort Moultrie on Sullivan's Island, and Fort Sumter, built upon a shoal about midway between the two islands.

From this rapid sketch, reference being had to the map, it will be readily appreciated that from the base held by the enemy, a *front* attack upon Charleston could begin here and nowhere else; and that, as the defences of the inner harbor were at that time imperfect, the immediate fall of Wagner would gravely impair the safety of Charleston also. But that little mound of sand had its history to make, a story that will ever bring a flush of honest pride to the face of every man who participated in the long defence.

As soon as we had reported to Colonel Graham, the troops were put into position, the 18th Battalion in the salient, the 12th upon its right, and the 1st Georgia on the left, occupying the flanking curtain and the sea face, to which allusion has been made. The guns were all manned by South Carolina artillery and the right and centre of the fort were held by infantry from the same State. The men were cautioned that an attack was expected at daylight, and then, tired out, they slept on their arms upon the ramp, ready at a moment's call for action. Captain C. Werner, of the German Volunteers, was appointed officer of the night, and in a few minutes every sound was hushed save the swash of the waves upon the beach, and the occasional challenge of a sentinel from his post.

My own resting place was upon the parapet, and looking up to the cloudless heavens above the solemn glory of the night impressed itself upon my last waking thoughts.

At the first peep of dawn, on the 11th, we were wakened by a few straggling shots in our front, followed by a ringing cheer and three distinct volleys of musketry from our picket line. The anticipated assault was upon us. In an instant, the garrison was aroused, and as the men had slept in position they had only to spring to their feet, and we were ready. Now we could see our pickets, their duty having been faithfully performed, retiring rapidly towards our right, in accordance with the instructions they had received, so as to uncover the advancing

columns of the enemy. And, then, through the dim, gray light of the morning we could distinguish a dark, blue mass of men moving up the beach towards us, at the double-quick, cheering as they came.

Then came the thunder of our first gun (what old soldier is there who does not recall *its* startling effect), then another and another, then the deafening rattle of small arms, mingled with yells and cheers, and we were fairly in the midst of battle. The issue was never doubtful for a moment. The attacking column attempted to deploy after passing the narrow neck in front, but entirely failed to do so; while the dense formation rendered it an easy mark for both infantry and artillery. Still it pressed gallantly on, and some few of the foremost men reached the scarp of the work, only to find themselves unsupported by their comrades, and with no other alternative than to yield themselves prisoners. One brave fellow I saw, however, who had not the thought of yielding in him. Alone he reached the top of the parapet, immediately in front of a 32-pounder, double charged with grape shot. The officer in command (Lieutenant Gilchrist, of South Carolina, if memory serves me,) struck by his bearing, called to him to come in before the gun was fired. His only reply was to put his musket to his shoulder, and a bullet whizzed by Gilchrist's head. The explosion of the gun followed, and a blue and mangled body, all that remained of a brave man and a good soldier, was hurled across the ditch.

The engagement was of short duration; the attack had failed, and soon the broken column was in full retreat, rapidly, and without any semblance of order, leaving some hundreds of their number, stretched dead and wounded on the sands, or prisoners in the fort.

Our own loss was insignificant in numbers, but the 1st Regiment was sorely bereaved in the death of Captain Werner. This gallant officer was slain early in the fight. He died in the discharge of duty, nobly battling for the land of his adoption. His voice, calling his comrades to arms, had been the first to greet our ears as the morning broke, and now it was hushed forever. Modest, simple, and unpretending in his manners, he had won a warm place in the affections of the command, while his perfect reliability under all circumstances enforced the respect and admiration of all who knew him. Savannah was called upon to mourn the loss of many sons in those terrible years, but none of them had taken up arms in her defense sooner, none suffered privation and imprisonment for her more patiently, and none died more gallantly than Claus Werner.

The loss in the 18th Georgia was heavier than in any other organization, as it had occupied the salient, against which the assault was principally directed.

Lieutenant Frederick Tupper was severely wounded, and among the killed was young Edward Postell, who now sleeps in Laurel Grove, side by side with a noble brother, who, like himself, as the marble record testifies, "died in battle."

Immediately after the action, a singular instance of the ups and downs and uncertainties of warfare, was brought to our attention. Among the first troops to enter Fort Pulaski, at its capture in the previous year, was the 7th Connecticut Regiment, then commanded by Colonel Alfred H. Terry (subsequently Major-General). Both officers and men had behaved towards us with great kindness during the few days that we remained at the fort after its capture, and we had become personally acquainted with quite a number of them. *Now*, we were the victors, and among the prisoners brought in at our end of the line, were many of our old friends of the 7th Connecticut, who recognized and called us by name.

The news of the attack created much excitement in Charleston, and during the morning many visitors, both military and civilian, came to the island, some to assure themselves of the continued strength of our position; others to gratify a pardonable curiosity. Among the former was Brig. Gen. Ripley, the district com-

mander, who was much elated at the successful issue of the fight, and who wished to examine, personally, the ground in front of the fort.

Now, at one point in our front, torpedoes had been planted the day before, and to prevent any of the garrison from treading upon them, a sentinel was placed to warn them off. At that time the man who held this post was private Donnolly, of Company G, 1st Georgia, a native of the Emerald Isle, as his name would indicate, and a true son of his mother. Of any knowledge of ordinary military manœuvres he was calmly innocent. On one occasion a Lieutenant of the company asked him, impatiently:

"Donnolly, why *don't* you keep step? All the men are complaining about you." And received the reply:

"Faith, its divil a one of 'em can kape shtep wid me!"

Past this hero General Ripley spurred his horse, and was riding straight for the dangerous ground, when he was suddenly brought to a halt by a loud "Shtop!" uttered in the most emphatic tone, and the emphasis receiving additional point from Donnolly's attitude, as he stood with his musket at full cock, at the shoulder, and squinted along the barrel, taking dead aim at the General. For a moment there was strong probability of a vacancy among the Brigadiers of the Confederate army, but an officer rushed forward, struck up the gun, and explained to General Ripley the reason for his being halted.

Subsequently, our sentinel was asked:

"Donnolly, what were you going to do?"

"I was going to shot him."

"And why?"

"To kape him from being blown up with the saltpaters, to be sure."

Donnolly's comrades, in view of his little infirmities of drill, had always insisted upon his having a place in the rear rank, but on this day he was heard to say, with much satisfaction:

"There's moighty little throuble getting in the front rank now."

Our experience for the next week was a trying one. Failing in the direct attack, the enemy's endeavor seemed to be to make our berth uncomfortably warm, and here the success was undoubted. Day after day the monitors—some four or five in number—and that tremendous war vessel, the "New Ironsides," would take their positions directly opposite the fort, at a distance of six to eight hundred yards, the wooden ships being at much longer range. Then would be poured in upon us a steady stream of shot and shell, much more pleasant to dwell upon as a memory than it was to endure, while upon the land side new batteries were built by the enemy, and each day the weight of metal thrown against us would seem to be heavier than the day before. I well remember the approach of the first monitor. How deliberate its movements; how insignificant its appearance; the deck almost level with the water, and the little black turret giving small promise of its hidden power for attack. My curiosity about the vessel was great, but was soon to be satisfied without stint. There was a slow revolving motion of the turret, a cloud of smoke, a deafening roar, and then, with the rush and noise of an express train, the huge fifteen inch shell, visible at every point of its trajectory, passed over head and burst far in the rear. The next shell exploded in the parapet, covering several of us with dirt. The introduction was complete. Thenceforward we held these singular looking craft in wholesome respect. The "Ironsides," however, was probably the most formidable ship of the fleet. She is said to have carried at bow and stern two hundred pound Parrott guns, and nine eleven-inch Dahlgrens on a side. Her broadsides were not fired in volley, but gun after gun, in rapid succession, the effect upon those who were at the wrong end of the guns being exceedingly demoralizing. Whenever she commenced there was a painful uncertainty as to what might happen before she got through.

We had but one gun with which to fight the monitors—the ten-inch Columbiad located just over the sally-port. True, the thirty-twos were tried for a while, but they were so impotent to harm the heavy mail of the ships that their use was soon discontinued. This Columbiad was manned, I think, by the Matthew's Artillery, of South Carolina, and the gunner, Frazer Matthews, was as noble a soldier as the siege produced. In the midst of the hottest fire he would stand quietly on the chassis directing the aiming of the gun with all the coolness and precision of target practice. Never flurried, always intent upon the work before him, and never giving the signal to fire until the aim was taken to his entire satisfaction, the accuracy of his marksmanship was great. Again and again I saw the solid ten-inch shot strike upon the sides of the monitors, only to break into a thousand fragments, that would splash into the sea like so much grape-shot.

At first we thought that no harm was done by our fire, but we learned afterwards that the concussion within the turret was tremendous, and that, among others, one very prominent officer had been killed by it.

Unfortunately, our Columbiad was soon dismounted, and although a new carriage was supplied, that, too, was knocked to pieces in short order. Indeed, this experience was repeated half a dozen times.

Such continuous cannonading of course seriously impaired the integrity of our parapets. But as at that stage of the siege the firing ceased at nightfall, opportunity was given to repair damages, and all night long the garrison would work, filling sand bags and painfully endeavoring to make good the yawning chasms and ragged craters left by the terrible missiles that had been hurled into the fort during the day. There was a constant strain upon all the faculties, that gave little time for anything save the stern duties of the hour, and yet there were humorous incidents ever occurring that even now will bring smiles to the lips of all who remember them.

Who can forget "Aquarius," the water bearer, as he was dubbed—a simple-hearted fellow, from the back woods of South Carolina, who devoted his time to bringing water to the wounded. Both heels of his shoes were carried away by a shell, and from that time he went barefooted—there was "danger in shoes," he said. And, then, the simple manner in which, on returning from one of his trips to the well, he held up one full jug and only the handle of another, saying, apologetically, "Oh, a shell took hit."

I can see in my mind's eye, too, the brilliant engineering feat of a member of the Oglethorpe Light Infantry, who, while cooking a little dinner in the open parade, provided protection for himself by placing an empty flour barrel alongside of the fire, and gravely sticking his head into it whenever the scream of a shell warned him of approaching trouble.

During the week General Taliaferro, of Virginia, assumed command, and on the night of the 17th fresh troops were sent to relieve us—and it may be mentioned here, that this plan of changing commanders, and the garrison (or at least a part of it), every few days, was continued throughout the siege. In fact, the strain upon body and mind was so unremitting, that a week's tour of duty was about as much as any men could undergo at a time, as there was no rest day nor night.

We were landed at Fort Johnson, on James Island, a little before dawn on the 18th, and were just getting comfortably settled in the village then existing at that point, when a tremendous cannonading began against the fort we had just left. All day long it continued, exceeding in fierceness and rapidity anything we had yet witnessed. The noise was terrific, great clouds of smoke hung over the devoted battery, and huge columns of sand rose high in the air, as shell after shell rent the parapets, while only an occasional shot in return gave any sign that there was life left in the garrison. With

mingled feelings we watched the bombardment, full of anxiety for the ultimate result, and for the safety of our comrades in the fort, there was, also, it must be confessed, a profound complacency at the thought that we were well out of it ourselves.

A little before dusk the firing suddenly ceased on the part of the enemy, and almost instantaneously a rapid succession of guns from Sumter, trained for the beach of Morris Island, gave notice that another attempt was to be made to throw a column into Wagner by escalade.

It was even so. General Gillmore, fully alive to the difficulties which the topographical features of the ground presented for regular approaches, and counting with reason upon the damaging effect of the awful bombardment, both upon the work itself and the "morale" of the garrison, had determined to make one more effort to wrest the position from the Confederates by storm. To this end he had organized a strong column of two brigades (a third brigade being held in reserve), under command of General Seymour, the formation being made behind the sand hills. Its advance was supported by light batteries, and as the heavy firing ceased, it swept forward with a rush. An officer, who was in Wagner, told me on the following day that the assault came very near meeting with perfect success, for, although it was anticipated, the awful artillery fire had compelled the garrison to seek shelter in the bomb-proofs. The exits from these places were narrow, and there was much trouble in getting the men to the ramparts in time to repel the onslaught. As it was, the result was long doubtful. A part of the enemy's column effected a lodgment in the salient on the left, and not until reinforcements were sent down from James Island to the assistance of the garrison, were these assailants finally overpowered and the entire fort once more in the hands of the Confederates.

The attack was bloody and disastrous to the attacking force. Its leader, General Seymour, was dangerously wounded, and General Strong, with many of his best officers, and hundreds of the men, were killed, while the total loss in killed, wounded and prisoners, has been variously estimated at from 1,500 to 2,200 men. Nearly all of the enemy's regiments were in a state of disorganization, and gloom and dismay settled upon them.

In this connection it will be of interest to state that, during the siege, the Federal signal book was in our possession, having been captured on the person of a signal officer, near Georgetown, South Carolina. Its valuable secrets had been drawn from him by a Confederate who shared his place of imprisonment in the garb of a Federal prisoner. More than once the knowledge thus acquired proved of essential service to us. On this occasion, the following dispatch from General Gillmore to Admiral Dahlgren had been intercepted, and in General Beauregard's possession hours before the assault: "Continue the bombardment throughout the day; at sunset redouble it. The assault will commence at seven."

Notwithstanding this disaster, General Gillmore, with great tenacity of purpose worthy of admiration, gave no evidence of having been diverted from his objective point. Though apparently convinced of the futility of all efforts at a *coup de main*, he at once settled down into an endeavor to reduce Wagner by parallels and trenches. Time was necessary to do this, however, and time was the salvation of Charleston, for upon *our* side the distinguished officer who commanded the department, General Beauregard, was not idle, and nothing was left undone for the defence, not only of the outworks, but of the inner harbor, and of adjacent islands and inlets. The batteries on Sullivan's Island were strengthened, heavy additions were made to the armament of Sumter, new batteries were constructed within the city limits and upon the shores of James Island; some to command the ship channel, and others to deliver a flanking fire, though at a long distance, upon the enemy's works on Morris

Island, while every device that the highest engineering skill could suggest, was gallantly acted upon by the garrison of Wagner to prolong its defence and retard its fall to the latest possible moment. Torpedoes and submarine batteries were placed in the waters of the harbor also, and, although I did not learn that one of them was ever exploded, there can be no doubt that they exerted a great moral effect, and deterred the vessels of the fleet from prowling around where we did not want them.

On the night of the 22d of July our second tour of duty at Wagner began. We found General Taliaferro still in command, and the garrison increased to about 1,500 men—though changes were so constantly being made that, without reference to statistical reports, I will not pretend to accuracy on this point. On every hand could be seen evidences of the severe trial through which the fort had already passed and was daily called upon to endure. The barracks and store houses were in ruins, and all of the slopes and inclines, upon which the eye of the engineer had loved to rest, were ploughed up in huge furrows, or pitted with cavernous holes that marked the bursting place of shells. But sand has many advantages over masonry, and wherever during the day the injuries done had impaired the defensive powers of the fort, a thousand busy workers would bend their energies, and the morning light would show guns remounted, parapets repaired and a strong front still presented to the enemy. On the 24th of July the bombardment was unusually severe. The iron clads, having nothing in Wagner to oppose them (for on that day our 10-inch gun was useless), came in as close as the channel would permit, shortly after daylight, and in conjunction with the land batteries poured in an awful fire upon us for hours, while from our side, Moultrie, Sumter, Gregg, and the batteries on James Island, Johnson, Haskell, and Cheves, joined in the fray. It was certainly a sublime yet terrible sight, never to be forgotten by any who witnessed it. The impact of tremendous missiles, followed by the roar of their explosion, shook the solid earth, and the loud thunder of the guns seemed to rival the artillery of the heavens as its unceasing reverberations smote upon the ear. Grave doubts were entertained as to the ability of our fort to stand much longer this dreadful storm, but help came: About noon the steamer Alice (that had recently run the blockade), under command of Colonel Edward C. Anderson, of this city, came rapidly down the harbor from Charleston, bearing a white flag, and laden, as we learned, with a large number of Federal wounded, who were to be exchanged for Confederate wounded. She steered directly for a position between the fleet and Wagner. One shot was fired over her, but in a moment the cannonading ceased, and never was relief more welcome or more needed.

Serious injury had been done to Wagner, injury, indeed, that a short continuance of the firing might have rendered irremediable, as upon inspection it was found that there remained but about eighteen inches of sand as a covering for the logs, of which our main service magazine was built. One shell had carried away the air-flue and the flame, as it burst, had lit up the interior of the magazine, very much to the dismay of the men who were serving there, and who came tumbling out head over heels—evidently not standing on the order of their coming—only desiring to come quickly.

Colonel Anderson, in speaking of this occurrence, tells me that as he came down the bay, the gravity of our position was fully realized by him, and his determination formed to pursue the course he did in order to bring the firing to an end as soon as possible. He was warned off as he drew near the fleet, and a shell fired over him, but paid no attention to the warning, and succeeded in what he aimed to do. It was the right thing done at the right time, and, as a member of the garrison, I beg to make

here my acknowledgments of the service performed.

The bombardment was not renewed that day, and during the afternoon General Taliaferro worked to such good purpose that nightfall found the principal damages substantially repaired.

On this occasion was brought to my attention a striking instance of the fact that a lofty heroism and nobility of soul may exist where an ordinary observer would never expect to find them. In the ranks of Company K, of the 1st Georgia, was a man from Bulloch county. Before his enlistment, a charcoal burner; he was of mean exterior, sickly frame and complaining disposition. He had long been a butt for the rough witticisms of his comrades, and more than once came to me for redress. What troubled him most was that the men told him he had been "dug-up," an implication upon the manner of his entry into the world—that he resented bitterly. During the bombardment of this day he had, in the performance of customary guard duty, been posted at the rampart, near the flag staff, to watch for any movements of the enemy that might indicate the formation of an assaulting column. At the end of his tour, Lieutenant Cyrus Carter started from the guard quarters to relieve him. Carter told me that as he crossed the parade, he did so with the profound conviction that he would be struck down before reaching the other side, so appalling was the storm of projectiles that tore up the ground around him. What was his surprise, therefore, to find the sentinel, not sheltered behind the parapet, as it was intended he should be, but quietly walking back and forth upon its very crest, for the expressed reason that he "couldn't see good down thar."

The flag staff had been shattered at his side, and with a strip torn from his shirt, he had tied the colors to the stump and continued his walk. As may be well supposed our charcoal burner escaped criticism after that.

From this time forward the works of the enemy were pushed forward most assiduously. One parallel after another was opened and breaching batteries established, armed with heavy sea coast mortars and rifle guns of tremendous size and power.

On our part, corresponding exertions were made. A heavy fire from our howitzers and other guns was maintained; sharp-shooters, armed with Whitworth rifles, kept unremitting watch upon the movements of the enemy, and a well placed line of rifle-pits, two or three hundred yards in our front, gave additional strength to our position and seriously annoyed the besiegers. There were two sides to the matter of sharp-shooting, however, and the loss of some brave officers and men, killed by bullets fired at a thousand yards distance, or more, warned us against anything like heedless exposure.

The discomforts and privations to which the garrison was subjected rapidly increased, and soon attained proportions that will be remembered by those who endured them, like the details of some horrible dream. To avoid an unnecessary loss of life, the men were kept as much as possible within the bomb-proofs during the day time; but the gun squads and riflemen, of course, were constantly exposed, as well as numbers who could find no room in the shelters, or who preferred taking the fresh air, with all its attendant hazards. From these there were constant additions to the list of our losses. The wounded (and the wounds were mostly of a terrible character), were all brought in among the men, and the surgical operations were performed in the midst of the crowd, by the light of candles, that dimly burned in the heavy air from which all vitality had been drawn. The cries of these poor sufferers, the unceasing roar of artillery above and around, the loss of rest, the want of pure air, and the baking heat of a Southern summer, all combined to render the position almost unbearable. The enemy's dead from the two assaults had been buried immediately in front of the moat; those from our garrison just back of the

fort. From the description of the island it will be understood that shallow graves only could be given—graves from which a high wind would blow the light, sandy soil, or which a bursting shell would rend, exposing the bodies to the sunshine. The whole air was tainted with corruption, and finally the little wells, from which our supply of water was drawn, became so foul, from the same cause, that their use was abandoned, and thenceforward drinking water was sent from the city of Charleston.

Now began a most remarkable feature of the siege, and one that has marked a new era in the science of attack and imposed new and startling problems upon the military engineer charged with the construction of permanent fortifications. I allude, of course, to the battering down of the walls of Fort Sumter from a distance of two and a half miles. The power of rifled guns against masonry had been conclusively demonstrated during the previous year at Fort Pulaski. There, however, the breaching batteries were distant about one mile, but there were few who could believe that at more than twice that range Sumter was seriously endangered. It had been thought that the grand old fort was safe so long as Wagner held out. But one morning a new battery opened; the shot and shell went high above our heads, and were hurled with irresistible power against the walls of Sumter. Great masses of masonry from the outer wall fell as each shot struck, and ere many days it seemed as though nought but a pile of ruins would mark the spot. Here, however, General Beauregard gave splendid evidence of his readiness to meet emergencies, and of his skill as an engineer.

As soon as it became evident that the fort must yield to the power of the heavy artillery brought to bear upon it, he rapidly withdrew all the guns that could be utilized for defensive purposes at other points, and from the very ruins of Sumter, constructed, as it were, a new fortification, fully adequate to the purpose of commanding the ship channel to the city. But all other power of the fort was gone, and in the subsequent events on Morris Island, Sumter took no part. This bombardment lasted for seven days, and in that time a first class masonry fort was reduced to a shapeless ruin from batteries located at points far beyond the remotest distance at which any engineer had ever dreamed of danger. The debris of the walls fell in a natural slope and served as an impenetrable protection to the lower casemates of the channel face, in which the new battery was placed. Some little time elapsed, however, before these changes were completed, and I am unable to understand why Admiral Dahlgren did not meanwhile avail himself of the opening thus offered and push with his iron-clads for the inner harbor. We certainly looked for such a dash, and General Gillmore was evidently chagrined at the fact that it was not made. Whether or not such a course would have been successful is problematical. There can be no doubt, though, that it would have added grave complications to the Confederate military position, to say the least of it.

At such time as the 1st Regiment was not on duty at Wagner, it was posted at Fort Johnson, the point of James Island nearest to Morris Island. For a time our comrades of the 12th and 18th Battalions shared this post with us, but as the season progressed, we were separated; the 12th going to Sumter and other points, and the 18th to Fort Moultrie, where it performed months of arduous and trying service.

At Fort Johnson, which, up to that time had possessed no special strength, very heavy works were constructed, having reference not only to the inner harbor, but also to the operations of the enemy on Morris Island. These batteries, as well as the others along the shores of James Island, proved very annoying to the enemy, and the accuracy of their fire is mentioned more than once in his reports.

A most interesting feature in this summer's operations was the development of

the attacking power of movable torpedoes. Special interest attaches to a boat that was brought from Mobile, by railroad, and which was generally known, from its shape, as the "Cigar Boat." Its history is linked with deeds of the loftiest heroism and devotion of self to the service of country. The story is familiar to all of us, yet I cannot refrain from repeating it.

This boat was one day made fast to the wharf at Fort Johnson, preparatory to an expedition against the fleet, and taking advantage of the opportunity, I examined it critically. It was built of boiler iron, about thirty feet in length, with a breadth of beam of four feet by a vertical depth of six feet, the figures being approximate only. Access to the interior was had by two man-holes in the upper part, covered by hinged caps, into which were let bull's eyes of heavy glass, and through these the steersman looked in guiding the motions of the craft. The boat floated with these caps raised only a foot or so above the level of the water. The motive power was a propeller, to be worked by hand of the crew, cranks being provided in the shaft for that purpose. Upon each side of the exterior were horizontal vanes, or wings, that could be adjusted at any angle from the interior. When it was intended that the boat should go on an even keel, whether on the surface or under, these vanes were kept level. If it was desired to go below the water, say, for instance, at an angle of ten degrees, the vanes were fixed at that angle and the propeller worked. The resistance of the water against the vanes would then carry the boat under. A reversal of this method would bring it to the surface again. A tube of mercury was arranged to mark the depth of descent. It had been the design of the inventor to approach near to an enemy, then to submerge the boat and pass under the ship to be attacked, towing a floating torpedo to be exploded by means of electricity as soon as it touched the keel. Insufficient depth of water in the harbor prevented this manner of using the boat, however, and so she was rigged with a long spar at the bow, to which a torpedo was attached, to be fired by actual concussion with the object to be destroyed. This change necessarily made the boat more unwieldy, and probably had something to do with the tragic circumstances of her after history.

It will be remembered that she was sunk at the wharf at Fort Johnson by the waves from a passing steamer, while a part of the crew were in her. Days elapsed before she could be raised. The dead were removed, and a second crew volunteered. They made repeated and successful experiments in the harbor, but finally they, too, went down and, from some unknown cause, failed to come up. Once more a long time passed before the boat was raised, and then the poor remains of the devoted crew were taken from her in an indescribable condition. Yet, still another set of men came forward and volunteered for the duty. Surely love of country and courage of the sublimest type never found better exponents than these. The expedition started, but did not return. That night the sloop-of-war, "Housatonic," was reported as having been sunk by a torpedo in the lower harbor, but of the gallant men who had thus accomplished what they aimed to do, nothing definite was ever known until after the war, when divers, in endeavoring to raise the Housatonic, discovered the cigar boat with the bleached bones of her crew lying near the wreck of the noble ship that she had destroyed.

The line of rifle pits in front of Wagner had been gallantly held by our men during the siege, and had sorely troubled the besiegers. On the 21st of August an infantry force attempted the capture of these pits, without success. On the afternoon of the 26th, a heavy artillery fire was brought to bear upon them without dislodging the holders, but that night a dashing charge of the 24th Massachusetts Regiment gained the position, capturing most of the Confederates who held it, about seventy men. General Gillmore's

fifth and last parallel was at once established on the ground thus won, and before dawn on the 27th, under cover of the flying sap, the trenches were pushed about one hundred yards nearer to the fort.

Notwithstanding this success, General Gillmore, in his report, speaks of this period as "the dark and gloomy days of the siege," and of the progress made as "discouragingly slow, and even painfully uncertain."

The ground between his front and Wagner was thickly studded with torpedoes, his left flank was searched by the unremitting fire from our batteries on James Island. The head of the sap was slowly pushed forward under the ceaseless fire of howitzers and sharp-shooters from the entire front of the fort, while last, though not least, the besiegers had now reached a point where every onward step compelled them to dig through the bodies of their dead, who had been buried some weeks before.

"In the emergency," General Gillmore availed himself of his superior resources in artillery, to keep down the active resistance of Wagner, and to this end every gun ashore and afloat was turned upon it. The final bombardment began at daybreak on the 5th of September and for forty-two hours continued with a severity and awful terror beyond the power of words to describe. That night, as witnessed from Fort Johnson, where the 1st Regiment were stationed, the scene was grand in the extreme. The lurid flashes of the guns, their unceasing roar, the shells from every description of tremendous artillery, that could be tracked through the air by flaming fuses; the mortar shell rising in stately curve and steady sweep, the Parrott shell darting like lightning in its mission of death, the missiles from the fleet booming along the water and bursting in Wagner with cruel accuracy, the glare of calcium lights, bringing out every detail of our works as in the noonday—all these filled the souls of Confederate spectators with awe, and found their painful antithesis in—*the silence of Wagner.* The end had come.

All through the 6th the bombardment continued, and that evening the sap had reached the counter scarp of the work, and only the ditch and parapet separated the combatants. The assault was ordered for nine o'clock on the morning of the 7th, but by midnight on the 6th the place was evacuated by the Confederates, the whole force being taken off the island in row boats. Some few of these boats were intercepted, but the garrison, as a garrison, was saved. The enemy at once occupied both Wagner and Gregg, and Morris Island, in its entirety, was in their possession.

So ended the siege of Battery Wagner, after a defense of fifty-seven days: a defense that may, without question, be said to have saved Charleston. The outwork was taken, but the inner citadel still proudly stood. Still from the ruins of Sumter, still from historic Moultrie, still from the "City by the Sea," the Southern Cross fluttered in the breezes of the bay and bade defiance to the foe.

The evacuation so successfully accomplished, in the face of so many difficulties, under so terrible a fire, and with the enemy in such close proximity, has justly been considered a remarkable event and the crowning glory of the defense. That had been protracted to the latest moment, and when resistance was no longer possible, the brave garrison was saved to add fresh lustre to the Southern arms on many another field.

On the afternoon of the 8th of September, notice was received by the commanders of batteries within range of Sumter, that a boat attack would be made upon that fortification during the night, and they were ordered at a given signal to open with all their guns upon the point where the boats were expected. The signals of the enemy had again been interpreted, and upon our side there was perfect readiness. The garrison of Sumter prepared to meet the enemy upon the slope with a shower of musketry. The guns of our contiguous batteries were

carefully trained upon the right spot before dark, and as soon as night had fallen, a Confederate ironclad moved into position to add the fire of her powerful guns. Silently the night wore on; for hours not a sound broke its stillness; the men sat drowsily by the guns, and the belief gained ground that the proposed attack had been abandoned, when suddenly there was a twinkle of a musket from Sumter, then a rocket soared in the air, and then the bellowing thunder of the great guns and the explosion of shells instantaneously and startlingly contrasted with the sleepy quiet of our long hours of watching. The assault was repulsed with considerable loss to the assailants, but with no loss to the garrison.

It is singular to note from General Gillmore's report, as an evidence of a want of harmony between the land and naval forces, that two independent expeditions were organized for this attack —one by Admiral Dahlgren, the other by General Gillmore. The report says: "The only arrangement for concert of action between the two parties, that were finally made, were intended simply to prevent accident or collision between them. Each party was deemed in itself sufficiently strong for the object in view."

The naval expedition, consisting of some twenty-five or thirty boats, came directly from the ships, in tow of steam tugs, and, reaching Sumter first, at once delivered its attack. The land forces, about 400 strong, embarked in their boats in Vincent's creek. The windings of the creek probably delayed them, and they had not quite reached the fort when the naval assault was made and repulsed. All hope of a surprise being at an end, the second force retired.

From this time the active operations for the reduction of Charleston upon this line virtually ceased, though an interchange of artillery fire was continued with more or less activity for many months. Not until Sherman's great army swept through South Carolina, and the dying days of the Confederacy were at hand, did the proud city bow her head, and yield to the inevitable.

Mr. President, my story is told. It has been my endeavor to place graphically before this audience a sketch of some of the scenes of that eventful summer. They have passed into history, but history fails to record a thousand little details which breathe life into the picture. Some of these I have tried to present.

Certainly no period of the war was more fruitful in dramatic incident, and in no portion of the Confederacy was there a grander exhibition of scientific warfare. The wonderful developments of engineering skill, both in the attack and in the defense, will ever mark the siege as a most memorable one, while the share of success attained by each side robs the memory of the event of any sting of mortification for Federal and Confederate alike. Sure am I that every member of the First Georgia who participated in these stirring scenes will, to his latest day, feel his heart throb with pride in saying, "I was at Charleston in 1863."

SAVANNAH, March, 1879.

NOTE.—Referring to the action of Col. Anderson, related on page 10, it is proper to state that the steamer Alice was sent out from Charleston *in conformity to an explicit arrangement that had been entered into by the commanding Generals for an exchange of wounded on that day.*

She carried a "hospital flag," as well as the ordinary flag of truce. Soon after the firing ceased, she was met by the Federal steamer Cosmopolitan, bearing the Confederate wounded, when the exchange was effected. Both steamers then returned, and the truce ended. C. H. O.